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Letter dated 23 January 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward a letter from Osman Saleh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea, addressed to you (see annex), in connection with the recent deplorable killing of five foreign tourists in northern Ethiopia and the deliberate misrepresentation of the tragic events in a letter sent to you on 18 January 2012 by Ethiopia.

I would be most grateful if the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 23 January 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In its letter of 18 January 2012 to the Security Council, the Government of Ethiopia misconstrues the tragic events of the deplorable killing of five foreign tourists in northern Ethiopia by armed gunmen to falsely accuse Eritrea of "direct involvement". Furthermore, the Ethiopian regime ratchets these trumped-up charges to goad the Council into taking punitive measures against Eritrea and warns that "it will [otherwise] be obliged to take whatever action is necessary to stop the activities of the Eritrean regime once and for all".

Eritrea will not dwell much, in the present letter, on the utterly groundless accusations deliberately peddled by the Ethiopian regime to serve other ulterior motives and objectives, as it has already pronounced its position through its press statement earlier last week. However, Eritrea wishes to underline that the cynical posturing of the Addis Ababa regime that it has every right to invoke Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations "in self-defence" and launch another war of aggression against Eritrea is not only legally hollow but carries the potential seeds of grave regional destabilization and conflagration. In the event, Eritrea wishes to emphasize and bring to the attention of the Security Council the following cogent points:

(a) The Ethiopian regime has flaunted international law, the Charter of the United Nations, and its treaty obligations to occupy sovereign Eritrean territories for the last 10 years. The authorities in Addis Ababa continue to flagrantly violate the provisions of Article 33, paragraph 1, of the Charter on peaceful and arbitral settlement of disputes among Member States to effectively reject the final and binding delimitation and demarcation decisions of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission to occupy by force the sovereign Eritrean town of Badme and other territories. It is patently clear that Ethiopia's dangerous acts constitute a grave violation of international law and impinge on regional peace and security. However, the excesses of the Ethiopian regime remain tolerated with impunity to date for reasons that we shall revert to later;

(b) As we underlined in our press statement of 18 January, the ill-advised attempts of the Ethiopian regime to take the senseless and cowardly killing of innocent civilians as a blessing in disguise to vilify Eritrea is not only morally reprehensible, but its threat to use force against another Member State on trumped-up charges is a violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter. Eritrea maintains that this behaviour is not acceptable and should not be tolerated anymore;

(c) As Eritrea has emphasized through its several communications to the Security Council, the unfair and unfounded resolutions (1907 (2009) and 2023 (2011)) that have imposed various sanctions against Eritrea, including an arms embargo, carry the risk of emboldening Ethiopia to contemplate reckless acts. Its current sabre-rattling is indeed a vivid corroboration of what may be in store unless the Council takes appropriate remedial action;

(d) Ethiopia's hollow accusations should not and cannot be taken in isolation. In the past two months, Eritrea has spent a lot of time and energy dispelling the equally preposterous allegations emanating from Kenya accusing it of supplying three planeloads of arms to Al-Shabaab through the town of Baidoa.

Those accusations were timed and synchronized with impending discussions of the Security Council on draft resolution 2023 (2011). The current accusations of Ethiopia have also occurred a few weeks before the forthcoming African Union summit in Addis Ababa, where Eritrea's representation will not be through its highest authorities. One can thus easily see the concerted and subtle subterfuges that have been set in motion to entrap Eritrea;

(e) As we intimated before, the Security Council's kid glove treatment of Ethiopia, the unfair punitive sanctions that have been imposed against Eritrea and the myriad accusations that are woven day in and day out to sully Eritrea's image are not all the workings and machinations of the Ethiopian regime alone. Although Eritrea does not prefer to go into greater detail at this juncture, it nonetheless wishes to underline that the whole jigsaw puzzle cannot be understood in isolation without factoring in the unprovoked hostility of the United States, which has taken the position that it has to promote its perceived interests in the region;

(f) The repeated harpings of the Ethiopian regime to implicate and portray Eritrea as the main culprit in the military activities of its multiple opposition movements and to repackage those activities as "conceived, planned and executed by Eritrea" is risible and really difficult to fathom. The Ethiopian regime does not, in fact, mince its words inasmuch as its declared intentions and actions are concerned with creating and propping up armed insurgents to topple the Government of Eritrea in pursuit of its avowed objective of "forcible regime change" in Eritrea. As mentioned in our letter of 4 January to the Security Council, the adviser to Ethiopia's Prime Minister and a senior member of the ruling Political Bureau openly announced in the Awasa Conference that "Ethiopia welcomes the timely convening of the conference to formulate new strategies to topple the Eritrean government" and that "Ethiopia will provide them with all the support they need to achieve the goals of [their] struggle". Indeed, these subversive groups make forays into Eritrea from Ethiopia to launch terrorist activities from time to time. Eritrea has chosen not to dwell on these events because they will only eclipse and divert attention from the profound and critical issues at stake. But it has never been driven to take, and does not subscribe to, reciprocal action as a matter of quid pro quo.

In conclusion, Eritrea wishes to urge the Security Council to re-examine, in the interests of peace and justice, the multifaceted situation that is prevailing in our area in its entirety and complexity. In this respect, Eritrea further urges the Council to ensure Ethiopia's prompt compliance with its treaty obligations and to respect international law.

(*Signed*) Osman **Saleh**
Minister for Foreign Affairs